

Dawn Patrol

World War I
Rendezvous
2 0 0 3

Dang! The target grew feet!

DICK STARKS



These full-scale Fokker DR-1 triplanes, known as Butcher Birds in World War I, were the highlight of the show. Left to right, the planes are owned by Ross Walton, Brian Coughlin, and Fred Murrin.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PIERRE KOTZE FROM ORIGINAL PHOTO BY DICK STARKS

Tom Glaeser passed over Point Magoo, banked his Nieuport 11 to port, and headed in for his first bomb run. Lining himself up with the target, he leveled the wings, centered the ball, and got ready to strafe. He could see the target ahead standing tall in front of the U.S. Air Force Museum.



Lt. Gen. Richard Reynolds, U.S. Air Force, recounts his flight in Rick Giles' Nieuport 12 to Tom Glaeser and Joyce Giles.

Tom's icy blue eyes narrowed. He shoved the throttle forward, and the mighty 1700 cc VW roared in rage. Into the imaginary cloud of fierce anti-aircraft fire he fearfully plunged, his white silk scarf drumming on the fabric-covered fuselage.

Death from on high was in the air over Dayton, Ohio!

In actuality, real and replica World War I aircraft owners and enthusiasts had assembled in Dayton, Ohio, in September 2003 to participate in the third Dawn Patrol Rendezvous, co-sponsored by the United States Air Force Museum and the Great War Aeroplanes Association. First held in 1996 with seven planes present, the event grew to 21 flying aircraft and 14 static aircraft on display in 2003. Organized by the special events staff of the museum, the Dawn Patrol Rendezvous has become a biennial event that many World War I aviation enthusiasts anticipate.

It's also a popular event for the museum's restoration staff members. Because many of the aircraft are trailered to this event, they enjoy assisting airplane owners assemble their airplanes and help keep us flying as much as possible. When I asked one of them why he was willing to give up his weekend off and volunteer to assist us, his answer surprised me. "Do you know what a change it is for us to work on

planes that are actually going to fly?"

The big hits of the 2003 show were three full-scale Fokker DR-1 triplanes brought in by Fred Murrin, Ross Walton, and Brian Coughlin. Fred and Ross's planes were powered by original World War I 120-hp Le Rhone rotary engines. They made a sound that has to be heard to be believed. It sounds kind of like a Singer sewing machine on steroids. Seeing those three airplanes come across the field in a loose route formation was a goose-bump-making affair. Particularly when they were chasing Rick Bennett's highly modified Graham Lee-designed Nieuport 23 replica.

Other replica and full-scale World War I aircraft present last summer

The safest place on the field when Tom Glaeser was making his bomb run was under the target, where Mark Pierce (left) and Dick Starks took refuge.



Finding a World War I Replica Aircraft

While Graham Lee designs once again dominated the Dawn Patrol Rendezvous, with 12 Nieuports either flying or on static display, there are numerous other World War I-vintage aircraft that "an average Joe" can afford to build and fly. Many of these replicas are expected to be sport pilot-eligible once the final sport pilot/light-sport aircraft rule is finalized. The following Internet sites provide valuable information about plans and kits now available. Several of the sites are hosted by current builders and include information on building and flying these aircraft.

The Kansas City Dawn Patrol
www.kcdawnpatrol.org

The Great War Aeroplanes Association
www.gwaero.org

Graham Lee's Nieuport replicas
<http://nieuports.com>

Airdrome Aeroplanes
www.airdromeaeroplanes.com

Replica Fighters Association
www.replicafighters.org

The Aerodrome Aircraft of W.W.I
www.theaerodrome.com/aircraft

The Arizona Wing of the Lafayette Escadrille
www.primenet.com/~lambertp

The Escadrille Lafayette of Wrens, Georgia
<http://home.earthlink.net/~jcm2/nieuport.htm>

Butch and Hugh's Nieuport Project
<http://members.tripod.com/WitlockD>

Mike Fletcher's Nieuport page
<http://mars.ark.com/~mdf/nieuport.html>

The St. Louis Escadrille, www.aerodrome.org
Cross & Cockade
www.crossandcockade.com



DICK STARKS

The view from Dick Starks' Nieuport 11 as he turns base to final for a flyover above the grass runway at the United States Air Force Museum during the 2003 Dawn Patrol Rendezvous. In the lower foreground, Mark Pierce makes an approach in his Nieuport 11.

included three full-scale Fokker D.VIIs, seven other Fokker full-scale and replica aircraft, a gaggle of six replica SE.5s, 12 Nieuports, a replica Jenny, an original Curtiss JN4D Jenny, a French Morane Saulnier, and an Albatros D.Va. All in all, a great turnout. (Many of these replica aircraft are expected to be sport pilot-eligible aircraft, when that rule is finalized.)

Every day started out the same. At

7:45, U.S. Air Force Maj. Steve Schnell, the safety marshal, would give the daily pilot briefing, followed by the local Air Force weatherman's prognostication for the day. (I'm pretty sure I saw him sprinkle chicken blood and do a complicated shuffle before he started.) Then it was time for the morning dawn patrol. The Nieuports and Jennys flew first, followed by the SE.5s and the Fokker triplanes. After that, radio-con-

Richard Enos of Santa Maria, California, brought this beautiful full-scale Fokker D-II to the Dayton Rendezvous. Richard started building the aircraft when he was 40. Now 43 years later, the aircraft's ready for engine tests and its first flight. Fokker triplane owner Ross Walton will make the first flight.



trolled World War I models flew. Some were so lifelike that we wondered if a full-scale airplane had wandered into the pattern.

Tom Glaeser's bombing run was part of Saturday afternoon's entertainment for the crowd. And, in true Kansas City Dawn Patrol style, entertaining is exactly what it was. Tom passed over the target, tossed his flour bomb, and...missed! Actually, calling it a miss would be an insult to misses. As near as we could tell, his bomb may have landed in downtown Dayton.

Mark Pierce and I, fellow Kansas City Dawn Patrol comrades of Tom, were embarrassed. Mark looked at me and said, "That was absolutely pathetic. He's making our group look bad." We decided the only safe place on the field was by the target, a large yellow cone, and moved out to stand beside it...and offered Tom directional assistance. We watched as he followed the pattern around the museum and lined up for his second bomb run. Again he passed over Point Magoo, the final turn to the target, and headed in for the drop, but again we could see he was going to be way off. Mark and I decided to intercede. We grabbed the cone, put it over our heads, and started running to intercept the flour bomb.

Robert and Mark Zilinsky's SE.5a flies over the F-104 on the museum grounds.



JEFF FISHER



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The 35 World War I replica aircraft attending the 2003 Dawn Patrol Rendezvous are dwarfed by the impressive United States Air Force Museum complex.



SHARON STARKS

Smoke on, Tom Glaeser, Mark Pierce, and Dick Starks make a loose formation down the Rendezvous flightline in their Nieuport 11s.


Tom let fly, but the fastest sprinters in the world couldn't have caught that bomb. It landed 150 feet from us in a cloud of white powder. As Tom roared away for another approach, Mark and I scurried back to the target area with the cone still over our heads, ready to try again.

Three more bomb runs produced the same result. Mark and I were running around looking like an insane yellow toadstool with four frantically pumping legs. We were gasping for air and

debating who was going to be the first to have a heart attack. It was time to give up. We later learned that people in the crowd were laughing so hard some had tears running down their faces. Tom landed to the cheers of the crowd, and quietly, the U.S. Air Force Museum's 2003 World War I Dawn Patrol Rendezvous went back to normal.

The impending arrival of a nasty cold front brought the action to a screeching halt on Sunday with planes

either blasting off to find a way through the front or heading for the restoration hangar to provide shelter for disassembly.

The next gathering on the museum grounds is planned for September 30-October 1, 2005. Many builders are frantically working on their World War I aircraft projects so they can bring their planes to Dayton. The Dawn Patrol Rendezvous is an event any self-respecting World War I enthusiast doesn't want to miss. I can't wait! 



JEFF FISHER

Fred Murrin and Brandon Murphy assist Ross Walton in refueling his DR-1.



Bill McKinney's Early Bird Jenny replica draws some onlookers.



Like many others, Lanny Turner's Nieuport 27 arrived at the Rendezvous in a specially built trailer.

DICK STARKS



This beautiful Bristol radio-controlled model was one of the many RC models that flew at the event.

JEFF FISHER